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**ASSESSMENT OF THE AIR EFFORT
IN VIETNAM AND LAOS (S)**

U. S. ARMY

ANNEX C



STAG

**STRATEGY & TACTICS
ANALYSIS GROUP**

CLOSE AIR SUPPORT

**COST SUMMARY
AND
DAMAGE ASSESSMENT**

SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED
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BY AUTHORITY OF: CHIEF STAG
DATE: 29 DEC 1965

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W A R N I N G (U)

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FOREWORD

1. (S) Annex C is part of an overall study and assessment of the air effort in Vietnam and Laos. It presents the cost of close air support (CAS) in South Vietnam (SVN) in terms of sortie cost, munitions cost, and cost of aircraft lost. In addition, the annex addresses other areas such as airfield construction cost, base security cost, Air Force Special Air Warfare units' contribution to the overall effort in SVN, and psychological impact of air attacks which have caused civilian casualties.

2. (U) Overall effectiveness of CAS in SVN cannot be quantitatively expressed. The Combat and Reconnaissance Air Activities File (COACT) for the period 1 January 1965 to 30 September 1965 does not report data on CAS sorties in SVN. The only source is the DOD Statistical Summary, Southeast Asia, which reports monthly totals of attack and other sorties. These totals do not separate CAS sorties from interdiction and armed reconnaissance. An attempt was made to extract data from the weekly Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) military reports (MILREPS) but these reports do not contain sufficient differentiation between CAS, interdiction, and armed reconnaissance to be of any value. Neither do the MACV Daily Situation Reports (SITREPS) present an accurate, consistent data source. The COACT reporting system changed on 1 October 1965 and now includes data on air activity in SVN. One purpose of the change in reporting systems is to remedy the paucity of data on CAS.

3. (U) This annex addresses those areas of consideration related to CAS included in the basic directive from ODCSOPS to STAG.

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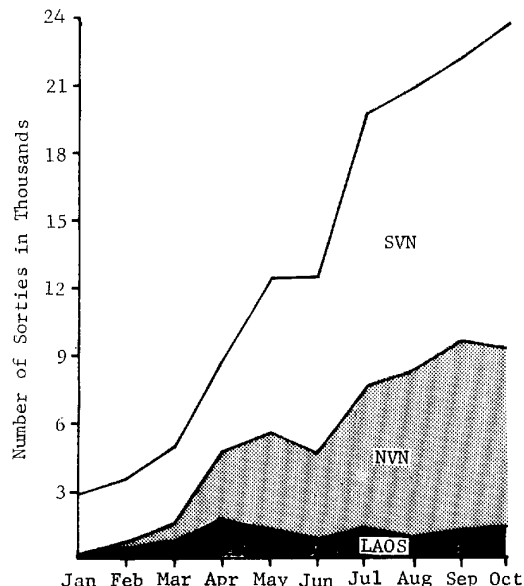
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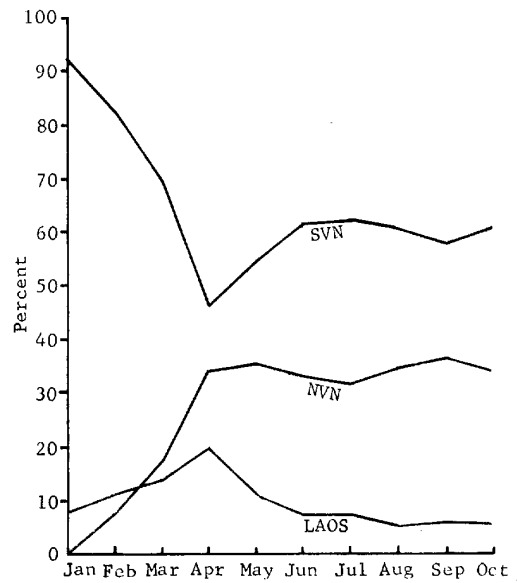
Close Air Support
(South Vietnam)

1. (S) There have been 51,192 sorties flown in SVN from 1 July 1965 through October 1965. (This excludes the light observation aircraft (0-1) and all logistical aircraft sorties).

2. (S) Figure 1 indicates monthly sortie rate for Laos/SVN/NVN and Figure 2 indicates percentage of air effort by country.

Figure 1--Monthly Sortie Rate,
Laos/SVN/NVN: 1965

Source: DOD Statistical Summary, SEA.

Figure 2--Percentage of Air Effort by Country,
Laos/NVN/SVN: 1965

Source: DOD Statistical Summary, SEA.

3. (S) The preponderance of the air effort in Southeast Asia has been allocated to support of ground forces in SVN engaged in combat with the Viet Cong. It is not possible to break out this support in terms of interdiction, armed reconnaissance and close air support, but a review of the MACV weekly Military Reports (MILREPS) and the Daily Situation Reports (SITREPS) indicates a large percentage of the sorties flown in

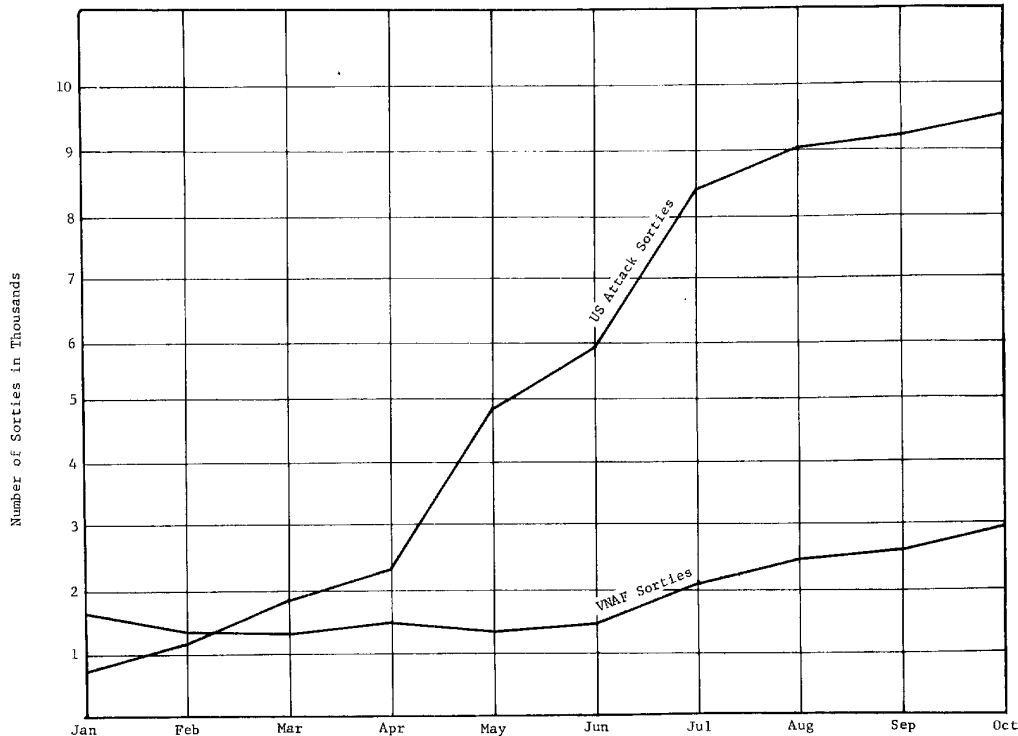
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SVN to be in a Close Air Support (CAS) role. Since the advent of the B-52 raids in June 1965 against point targets the requirement for single engine high performance aircraft to strike point targets has diminished. Figure 3 indicates monthly sortie rate for US and VNAF aircraft.

Figure 3--Monthly Attack Sortie Rate--US and VNAF
January-October 1965



4. (S) Research and analysis of all available evidence supports the general consensus that Close Air Support is adequate, responsive, and effective; that there does not appear to be any conflict between Air Force CAS and fires delivered from Army armed helicopters; and that complete integration of mortar, artillery, armed helicopter, and CAS fires in airmobile operations is an established fact. Ground commanders consider CAS to be an essential element of supporting fires to land combat forces.

5. (S) There are problems still to be resolved. Some of the more important are listed below:

a. Reports from Vietnam indicate that the air space in SVN is becoming saturated, requiring closer control of air traffic. An integrated tactical air control system (ITACS) is being planned.

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b. Reports from COMUSMACV indicate that reconnaissance and surveillance efforts have been inadequate to meet rapidly increasing requirements. There has been evidence of continuing improvement. Both the Army and Air Force are moving units and equipment to SVN to correct the deficiency.

c. Increased ground and air activities will cause continued and increasing disruption to civilian communities. A concerted effort must be made to dispel and counter adverse reaction to air and ground action by the local community. It would appear that there are sufficient agencies of the US and GVN to resolve this problem and we should profit by past mistakes in this area.

d. There appears to be an overabundance of reports submitted by all elements in SVN, yet there does not appear to be a concerted effort on the part of Army staff agencies at all levels to improve the reports or to make use of the data in arriving at long range decisions or establishing usable doctrine for employment of joint forces in an environment such as Vietnam. This conclusion has been borne out in this study. There was almost a complete lack of useful data upon which a study of close air support operations could be made. (See final report for recommendation on improving the reporting system).

6. (S) The basic directive assigning STAG the mission of assessing the air effort in Vietnam and Laos contained a series of suggested areas for consideration. Those areas pertinent to close air support are included in Tabs A through T, Appendix IV, to this annex.

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